

Early Christmas present with free parking to boost trade in Stafford and Stone

14/11/2024



Shoppers may be able to park for free in Stafford and Stone town centre on three key days in the run up to Christmas.

Stafford Borough Council is proposing to waive charges on its car parks on the three Saturdays before Christmas to encourage more people to visit the town centres to boost trade for local businesses over the festive season.

The free car parking period would run throughout the day from Saturday 7 December and on the following two weeks - 14th and 21st - and would apply to all borough council managed car parks in the town centres - except the Riverside and Waterfront car parks in Stafford.

The move has been welcomed by the business community who said it would be a nice present for shoppers and traders this Christmas.

Council leader, Aidan Godfrey, said: "These three days are some of the busiest times of the year for shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants, and a host of other businesses, and what we are proposing would help them capitalise on the festive spirit by enticing more people to the town centres in Stafford and Stone."

Mary Walker, Chair of Stafford Town Centre Partnership, (STCP) said: "This would be a brilliant early Christmas present for our businesses and a great example of how

our new STCP and borough council are working together for the benefit of our local economy.

“They are three key dates for our retailers who I know would welcome this and be doing their best to promote the free parking days in their own premises, on websites and across social media.

“I would urge all our residents to take advantage of this free parking and take the opportunity to do their Christmas shopping, or have their Christmas meals and drinks, in the borough making this a very Happy Christmas for all.”

Councillor Rob Kenney, deputy leader with responsibility for the town centres said: “It has been another challenging year for retailers but it has been pleasing to see more investment coming to the borough with recognised names and smaller enterprises, setting up in, or relocating, here.”

“We all have to support our local businesses and I hope these proposals will be backed and that people take advantage of the free parking offer.”

There is already significant investment taking place to transform the town centre in what has been named ‘Project Stafford’ by the council leader. Demolition is expected to start next year on the Guildhall Shopping Centre and former Co-op Department Store in the High Street - with the historic frontages of both buildings being retained - to pave the way to attract commercial and residential developments at the sites. Internal works are already underway.

Work will also begin in the new year on improving the approach and entrance to Stafford Railway Station.

The proposals for free parking will go before a meeting of the full council in December.

A list of Stafford Borough Council run car parks can be found at www.staffordbc.gov.uk/parking